



Raise Your Child To Be Emotionally Intelligent

Parents strive to treat their children fairly and with love and respect; however, the stresses of daily life often interfere. Your six year old wants to frost the cake, but can't stop dripping the frosting; your sixteen year old didn't tell you about that ding in the car. How do we deal with children in these situations, where emotions can run high? John Gottman, a renowned psychologist in the field of marriage and family therapy describes an "emotion coaching" approach in his book, *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child*.

He describes three types of parenting that fail to teach emotional intelligence. These include:

- Dismissive parents, who disregard, ignore or trivialize children's negative emotions;
- Disapproving parents, who are critical of their children's displays of negative feelings and may reprimand or punish them for emotional expression; and
- Laissez-Faire parents, who accept their children's emotions and empathize with them, but fail to offer guidance or set limits on their children's behavior.

An Emotion Coaching parenting style is characterized by empathizing with the child, helping to guide the child in trying to process uncomfortable feelings, and then moving through to a plan of action if the situation requires it. Gottman outlines five steps to this process:

1. become aware of the child's emotion;
2. recognize the emotion as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching;
3. listen with empathy, validating the child's feelings;
4. help the child find words to label the emotion he is having; and

5. set limits while exploring strategies to solve the problem at hand.

Consider the following illustration of how differently these parenting types respond to a similar child. Imagine Diane, already late for work, trying to get her three year old son to put on his jacket so they can leave for the CDC. The morning has been tough, breakfast was a harried affair, and there was a fight over shoes, leaving both of them tense. Her son tells her he wants to stay home and play. When Diane says "get into the car" her son falls to the floor and starts to cry.

If she were a Dismissing parent, she might tell him that his reluctance to go to daycare is "silly" and that there's no reason to feel sad about leaving the house. Then she might try to distract him or bribe him with a cookie.

As a Disapproving parent, Diane might scold him for his refusal to cooperate, saying she is tired of his bratty behavior, and threaten to spank him.

As a Laissez-Faire parent, Diane might accept all the anger her son dishes out, empathizing him and telling him of course he would want to stay home. Unfortunately, there would be nowhere to go next. She wouldn't scold, spank or bribe, but of course, she would still have to go to work.

The Emotion Coach on the other hand, would start out with empathy, letting her son know she understands his sadness and anger, but then she would provide guidance for what to do with the uncomfortable feelings. Then they would discuss how he must go to daycare, but help him to brainstorm other ideas for what could be done to solve the problem

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Occupational Therapy Series, Part 9

Teaching Lowercase Letter Formation

As with capital letters, lowercase letters should always be formed from the top down, left to right and in the progressive stroke order sequence discussed in the last newsletter.

Once the child has mastered the uppercase letters, s/he will already know 11 lower case letters (s, o, c, v, w, y, z, x, k, u, and p). Here is the teaching order:

- c, o, s, v, w: we start here as these are the same as the upper case letters

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(for example, go to friend's house, have grandma come visit to help out, plan a fun event for the weekend instead).

What is the benefit of teaching your child to be more emotionally intelligent? Gottman's research shows that children whose parents were Emotion Coaches had better health and scored higher academically than kids whose parents did not offer such guidance. Further, these kids got along better with friends, had fewer behavioral problems and were less prone to violence. In sum, they were more emotionally healthy. To learn more about the techniques described here, check out the book in its entirety, full of a number of good ideas with steps outlined that you can follow and apply.

This article was excerpted from: Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child: The Heart of Parenting, by John Gottman, PhD with Joan DeClaire.[]



10 Tips to Keep Your Child Reading This Summer

1. **Use Hollywood to inspire your child to read.** Take advantage of movies and DVDs that are based on books appropriate for your child's age.
2. **Play a summer reading game at your local library or start your own book club.** Many libraries offer popular summer reading programs. You could also create your own reading game at home with a chart, stickers and perhaps a grand prize of the child's choice.
3. **Involve your child in planning your family vacation.** Whether it's a trip to the ballpark or across the country, have your child research the players, the sites, and even the weather.
4. **Start a collection.** Help your children become experts on something this summer by starting a collection.
5. **Visit a comic shop.** The transformation of classic comic strips like Scooby-Doo, Spiderman and Batman into motion pictures has renewed an interest in comic books.
6. **Read cookbooks and packaged food labels.** Have your children select recipes they would like to try. Include them in grocery shopping and meal preparation.
7. **Read instruction pamphlets.** This kind of "practical" reading helps children connect reading with hands-on learning. Reading instructions for building projects, assembling games or blowing up pool toys can give children a real sense of accomplishment.
8. **Read the newspaper aloud.** Start reading part of newspaper articles aloud and encourage your child to do the same. Some newspapers even have children's sections. This is a great way to engage your child in conversation and peak his interest in what is going on in the world.
9. **Get a magazine subscription for your child.** There are numerous magazines that are targeted to young kids and preteens. Kids can often identify with the subject matter, and the articles will hold their attention.
10. **Be a reading role model.** Let them see you read. Read anywhere—the airport, bus stop, doctor's office, etc.[]

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- t: lowercase t is like the capital but crosses lower; this is the first letter learned that is above the line (double-lined paper) or lowercase that starts all the way at the top.[]

- a, d, g: these are "Magic C" letters that all start with the "c" stroke (counterclockwise).

- u, i, e: these complete the vowel sounds. The letter "e" is very difficult to write.

- l, k, y, j: this is a transition group: ascenders (l, k...very top), descenders (y, j...below the line).

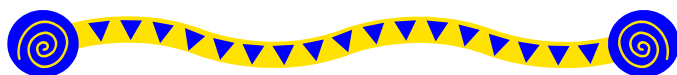
- p, r, n, m, h, b: these are "Diver letters", they start at the top and "dive down, come up, and swim over to the right". Teaching h before b helps to reinforce stroke order.

- f, q, x, z: "f" has a difficult starting stroke, curved at the top. "q" is here to avoid confusion with "g" and "p". Both "x" and "z", like their capital counterparts are used infrequently. (This completes the Occupational Therapy Series.)[]

SCHOOL TIP

A home dictionary is essential, but if it is kept on a shelf to gather dust, it won't do anyone any good. Keep it in an accessible place and let your child see you refer to it from time to time. If the family dictionary is kept in the living room and the child studies in her room, get her an inexpensive dictionary for her exclusive use.

Good dictionary, encyclopedia and organizational skills depend on the ability to alphabetize. See if your child's teacher practices alphabetizing in class. Try alphabetizing spelling words, family members' names or a few favorite toys at home as a way of practicing. Keep this up over the summertime to help maintain your child's skills during the break.[]



Questions? Concerns? Comments? PLEASE email us at bhcatsugi-edis@nhyoko.med.navy.mil and we'll include the question and response in future newsletters (or we'll respond privately if you'd like—just indicate your preference.)[]